



METROPOLITAN
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COMMISSION

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Memorandum

TO: Commission

DATE: January 21, 2009

FR: Legislation Committee

W. I.: 1131

RE: Committee Recommendation

The Legislation Committee met on January 9 and referred one item to Commission.

- **Toll Bridge Legislative Strategy**

Based on recent analysis by Caltrans and the Bay Area Toll Authority regarding reduced toll traffic, the effects of the 2008 credit crisis and the need to seismically retrofit two more bridges, the Committee considered a three-step strategy to pursue in the upcoming legislative session:

1. *Seismic Safety*

Amend the Toll Bridge Seismic Retrofit Program to include the Antioch and Dumbarton bridges. The fastest path to seismic safety is to amend these projects into existing state law.

2. *State Responsibility*

Make changes to the balance of shared responsibility between toll payers and the state by taking on additional financial commitments from Bay Area toll payers to fund state-owned toll bridges.

Given the funding crisis at the state level, it is unlikely that MTC will be able to deliver additional state funds to the retrofit project. Instead, MTC will focus on changes in law to allow for more efficient operations in the toll bridge program by reducing the amount of overhead charges imposed by the state, and by discussing with the state the possibility of assuming greater responsibility for manual toll collections, subject to proper protections for Caltrans employees.

3. *New Authority*

Seek increased authority by asking voters for greater flexibility over toll structures in order to include congestion pricing and a high-occupancy toll network.

Committee Recommendation: Approve the toll bridge legislative strategy.